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WHAT IT IS THAT HEALS

By

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WHAT IT IS THAT HEALS

THE history of humanity is for the most part a record of suffering. "The ills that flesh is heir to" and the consequent burden that has been cast upon our race, are subjects which, from the earliest times, have compelled the attention of the historian, the poet, and the philosopher.

IT is not surprising that side by side with this story of pain, we should find a record of the many ways in which humanity has sought to avoid or to at least lighten its burden. From the earliest times the race, in its fight for life, has been prone to look beyond the use of mere physical

agencies and to pin its faith to things mysterious and invisible. By sorcery, cures have been wrought throughout the ages; devils have been driven out, and flesh and bone purified and restored by incantation and magic rites; voodoos and witch doctors and medicine men are met with among the semi-civilized and savage tribes, both now and in what history we have of their past. This is true regardless of race or clime. The Laplander, the dweller in the forests of Equatorial Africa, and the Bushman of Australia each clings to his peculiar fetish. Even among the ultra-civilized of the earth the sacrifices to the gods of the ancients, whether Israelitish, Greek or Egyptian, have, in the era of Christianity, merely been replaced by prayers to saints and pilgrimages to shrines. Within the very

recent past, when the discoveries of Huxley and other investigators, and the generalizations of Darwin and Herbert Spencer had started a wave of materialism, the curious tendency of the race to appeal to the unknown and unseen when in trouble, seems not to have been diminished, and nowadays, when the pendulum appears to be swinging back, and matter has failed to convince the world that it is everything and there is nothing else, this tendency has grown to a marvelous degree. Christian science, faith cures, and mental science in its many and ever increasing forms meet us at every turn, and we still have with us believers in miracles, and pilgrims to Lourdes and other holy shrines.

SO long as one's knowledge of these faith cures, mental sciences, and pilgrimages is con-

fined to the bare fact that there are such things in the world to-day, one is apt to regard them as either remnants of the superstitions of the Middle Ages or the work of ignorant charlatans and undeserving of serious attention. But a little conscientious research into the fact gives the most sceptical of us a good deal of food for thought. Pilgrims to Lourdes and other shrines *have* been cured, and many astonishing instances of almost instantaneous healing are authenticated beyond question. And so, mental healers, metaphysicians, Christian scientists, faith curers, and the others of the same kind *do* perform cures—in some instances very marvelous cures.

THESE results are at first sight bewildering. How can recovery of health be arrived

at through such a multitude of dissimilar methods? The pilgrim asks for aid from the spirit of a departed. The Christian scientist tells the sufferer that there is no such thing as suffering. The faith curer says there is suffering, but that faith in God will bring relief. Mental healers rely upon some mysterious power of the mind over the body. In some instances it is the mind of the so-called healer whose power is invoked, and, in others, that of the sufferer.

THE identity of results attained by means so diverse would lead one to seek some principle, some element common to all. Underlying the chant of the savage, the prayer of the saint or sinner, the "denials and affirmations" of the Christian scientist, their "absent treatments" and those of the "metaphysicians,"

there must be some natural law, which is set in motion and through which cures are wrought.

ONCE we discover this law and learn to apply it we may avail ourselves of its blessings, stripped of the useless encumbrances with which superstitution and quackery have invested it.

THE well nigh hopeless confusion which confronts us at the outset of our search is largely the result of the curious fondness of the race for things mysterious. The habit of ascribing any good or bad fortune to "spirits," incantations, fairies, guardian angels, and such other sources has clung to humanity from the earliest times, and is, apparently, as strongly inherent in our natures to-day as it ever was, only to-day it often takes shape in a belief in

some unknowable force referred to indefinitely as "the sub-conscious mind," or the "power of the will," or the "power of belief" or what we will.

HOW and why "mind" or "will" or "faith" does its healing no one tells us, at least, so that we can intelligently understand it, and it is to be feared that even when it is shown that obedience to a simple natural law is the only thing that heals, instead of greeting the discovery with joyous acclaim, there are some who will view their shattered idols with very real distress. When we have habitually viewed certain phenomena in the light of current superstition, the shattering of that superstition by demonstrating the cause of these phenomena as entirely consistent with natural law, is by no means at-

tractive to the average mind. Such a mind clings to belief in an angry god loosing the lightning rather than to a mere natural restoration of equilibrium between two electrically charged bodies; it prefers to consider the epileptic as being possessed of a devil, rather than as the unfortunate victim of a brain disease. Copernicus and Newton, and many another pioneer in thought, have suffered from persecutions dictated by this tendency of humanity; nevertheless, clearing our mental horizon of the most insignificant of those clouds of superstition, born of ignorance and bequeathed to us by our forefathers, is well worth the doing.

THE purpose of this article is to lay before the world the results of twenty years of observation and experiment in a search

for "what it is that heals." It is given to the public in the hope that a study of these pages may lead some to a true understanding of many things which have not been understood before now.

TO my mind, although much is left to be done in exploring the new fields which have been opened by discoveries made in the course of these twenty years, the results are sufficiently tangible and important to give to the public.

AT the age of eighteen I was apparently a hopeless invalid. My condition was due to overwork in the study of music. The breakdown was complete and the highest medical skill both in Europe and America had been appealed to in vain. Restoration to health seemed hopeless, and life offered nothing but a

weary stretch of years filled with suffering.

DURING the days of isolation and idleness prescribed by physicians, I was constantly haunted by the senseless injustice of it all. Why must preparation for excellence in the beautiful art of music necessitate long years of straining over the key-board with aching back and fingers, and with always the chance, that in my case had, alas, become a reality, of destroying the wonderful living mechanism of which so much was expected, and along with it the general health of mind and body? Surely such a method was an insult to intelligence.

AND, now that I was ill, how utterly futile and inadequate the treatment prescribed by the leading minds of the medi-

cal world! Why these hours of idleness during which I was told to do nothing, think of nothing? Having been worn and broken by over straining, until what had been a healthy young organism had become a nervous wreck, that organism with its delicate mechanism all awry was suddenly to be held in idle suspense, and the rust of disuse was to complete the ruin of overwork.

MORE by chance than anything else, and to get through some of the awful hours of emptiness which made up my days, I began to amuse myself by concentrating my mind upon some musical phrase, or single tone, picturing to myself how it should sound. This concentration would take place while my body lay in a state of complete relaxation. Before very long I noticed that

mental concentration under these circumstances was accompanied by a distinct physical sensation. A large part of my days thereafter was spent in inducing this sensation, which I found to be very agreeable, and I would lie for hours in a state of what might be termed ecstasy. I learned that I could, to some extent, direct it: I could confine it to a certain part of my body or let it course through the whole of me. This was done merely by an effort of the will. I then noticed that, after inducing these sensations for considerable periods of time, I felt distinctly better—physically and mentally. It was about this time that the thought began to dawn on me that I might have discovered some force which would cure. For force of some kind, I concluded, must be the cause of my sensations, as I had by this time reached

a point in development when, from a gentle glow, the feeling experienced would at times resemble a veritable electric shock.

ONE of my arms had been rendered almost useless from overwork at the piano, and the fingers were partially paralyzed. I determined to experiment on this arm and hand by directing the "current," as I called it to myself, into this particular part of my body. After repeated trials I succeeded in accomplishing this and kept the hand and arm tingling for hours. In a few days there was a distinct improvement in their condition, and in the end, their use was completely restored.

ALL this time I kept my discovery strictly to myself. It was quite useless to say anything

to my advisers and attendants as they would not have believed me. But I determined to break jail; to send this force all through my body, and to be well again. I further wished to learn all I could about the current, and to ascertain, if I could, its nature and origin. I continued the practice, begun accidentally, of "slowing down" the mental activities, and retiring within myself to experiment with the current. I found I could induce the sensations that a musical concept awakened, at all times, and prolong them indefinitely, and that I was perceptibly stronger physically, after each experiment. I learned, furthermore, that the sensations were not dependent upon a *musical* concept but could be induced by mental concentration, accompanied by physical relaxation.

A PERIOD of wide reading, with a view to finding what had been thought and said of such a force and its manifestations through the body, then followed. Early philosophy—Vedante and Hebrew Scripture—and the teaching of the wonderful Nazarene and of his disciple Paul, were in turn studied.

THE stupendous words, "the Lord thy God in the midst of thee is mighty," "I have told you ye are Gods," "the kingdom of God is within you," "the Father is in me, I in Him, and we in you," "Ye are the temple of the living God," "God is spirit; and they that worship Him must worship Him *in spirit* and in truth" made a deep impression on me and continuously asserted themselves day and night. If these sayings were true why was hu-

manity in ruins. If the Lord in the midst of man is mighty, why did not man *know* it, *realize* it, and act upon this knowledge. If man is the "temple of the living God" what relation did this live, mysterious force that I had discovered in my body and which had restored it to health, bear to the "living God" in that body, to the "spirit within" of the Hindoo Rishis.

FROM the ancient philosophers I dipped into Christian science, faith cure, and mental therapeutics. All *proclaimed a power*, but *how* to find the power, *how* to know when one did find it, *how* to use it, *why* faith should cure, *why* disbelief in suffering should annihilate suffering, *what* the medium of interaction between mind and body is, *how* the mind affects the body, were

questions to which none suggested any satisfactory answer. Much that I had read was plainly the result of misguided ignorance, or the coarsest charlatanism. One idea remained with me. It came from the writings of the mystic philosophers and from the words of the Nazarene—and that was that there is some *inner power* possessed by man which, if it could only be found and subjected to intelligent control, could be used to his great good. I fell to wondering if it was not the "living God in the temple" that had restored my fingers; if it was not the life of the God in *me* that I felt in my fingers.

FROM this point of view I undertook a close study and observation of the phenomena of mental influences of all times—their relationship to instinct, char-

acter and the will. This work has left me with no debate in my own mind regarding *what it is that heals*, nor regarding the universal availability of this power. I am firmly convinced that this something which I have learned to control and direct, and which has restored my physical health, is the force back of *all the healing of all time*, heretofore unconsciously summoned through states of mind induced by prayer, incantation, "repetitions and affirmations."

FROM experiments upon myself, the next step was to experiment upon others, and for a number of years I have done this, and have noted results in many cases of widely different disorders. These results have, except in two cases, been uniformly beneficial, and in many instances complete cures have resulted. In the two

instances I mention as exceptions, the subjects, after repeated trials, were unable to induce or feel the current in the slightest degree, and apparently derived no benefit from the experiment. The kinds of disease experimented upon have been many kinds, although mental and nervous disorders have predominated. The subjects have not been required to believe in anything they could not feel by actual sense perception. They have not been asked to accept any theory or belief, but are told to follow a few simple directions, and to watch the results. In other words, instead of appealing to a faith in the unknown or unseen, or attempting to induce a belief in a mysterious something, the existence of which I could merely affirm, I have shown them that they can themselves induce this power that heals, and prove for

themselves that it exists, through the medium of their own senses.

ALTHOUGH much remains to be done in ascertaining the exact nature of the force manifested, enough is already known to indicate that, in all probability, it consists of, or is accompanied by, intense vibrations of the body, or those parts of the body, into which it may be directed; that it can be sent from one person into another, either by actual contact between the two, or without any contact whatever, and in some instances where the persons are some distance apart.

THE writer's firm belief, based upon experience and careful observation, is:

First.—That this force is not automatically generated by the experimentor, but flows in from without.

This belief is strengthened by the fact that after continuing experiments for some time, one is able to perceive the force upon relaxing physically, without mental direction or concentration, the whole body becoming immediately suffused with a tingling glow as though a flood were sweeping in from all sides upon the opening of many gates.

Second.—That the vibrations which are either induced in the material composing the body by the influx of this force, or of which the force itself consists, are of many speeds and characteristics, and can be carried to a point at which they produce the effect of a heavy electric shock.

Third.—That the results in whatever degree obtained are universally beneficial, increasing the vitality of those already in the enjoyment of health and restoring lost equilibrium to the sick or mentally and physically exhausted.

THE field opened is apparently unlimited. If, by this force, tissue can be rebuilt and diseased cells eliminated from the living organism, why cannot healthy bodies be improved, and brains reformed? And if the gray matter of the cerebrum can be developed and if our natures and tendencies and dispositions are dependent upon the quantity and quality of the gray matter, why cannot character be created, undesirable traits eliminated and useful tendencies developed?

DIRECTIONS

THE principal requirement is physical relaxation, by the aid of mental direction.

THE clothes should be loose and comfortable. If the experiment is tried while in bed, the covering should not rest heavily upon the body.

TAKE either a reclining or a sitting position and make yourself as comfortable as possible. Then generally let go of all the muscles. A few seconds after this begin at the head and *consciously* relax the several external organs and the limbs in turn. Beginning with the muscles of the head, face and jaw—the eyes should fall in the sockets and the lids drop. The tongue must be relaxed and so on through the

muscles down to the toes. Next start at the head again and reduce the tension on the brain. Avoid mental wanderings, and do not *concentrate too much* on what you are doing; mental abstraction, not contemplation, is nearer what you should attempt. Let the direct attention of the mind pass down through the body, this time *inside*. Direct the attention to organ after organ, as they are reached, with the conscious intention to relax. After this lie relaxed for a few seconds, and once more starting at the head, let the mind consciously sweep slowly through the body down towards the lower extremities. The breath can be used as a guide. Picture the outgoing breath as being emptied into the thorax and gently surging downwards through the abdomen into the legs and down to the toes.

IN a brief time, often in a few seconds, one feels a definite sensation, something like gentle pin-pricks. The sensation is described differently by different individuals—sometimes first in the fingers and toes, sometimes the feeling is general throughout the body, commencing with a gentle glow which gradually takes the form of waves of tingling vibration sweeping through the body, increasing in strength and reaching a climax, after which the wave impression ceases and every fibre and cell in the whole body seems to be thrown into a state of intense vibration.

IT will be found that with each trial the attainment of results becomes easier and more marked, until a point is reached when *conscious* relaxation alone is

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sufficient to fill the whole body instantaneously with surging currents.

THE sensation is not only pleasurable, but ecstatic, and the effects, which are exhilarating, invigorating, or restful and soothing as one desires, can be distinctly felt for hours afterwards. Sleep induced by this means will be found to be more delightful and invigorating than that which comes without this preparation.

THE scope of this little book will not permit of extended explanations of the use of the current in connection with treatment of diseases, or of its induction into other persons.

IF the experimenter succeeds in obtaining the results, above described, in his own body

and is convinced thereby of the existence of this force, which only waits to be recognized and placed in the service of the Human Race, the writer will have accomplished the important first step in the work to which her life has been largely devoted for many years.

FROM time to time other volumes will be issued, in which will be set down what has already been done in restoring many to health from disease, and definite directions given for the education of self in the prevention and cure of disease and the maintenance of health.

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